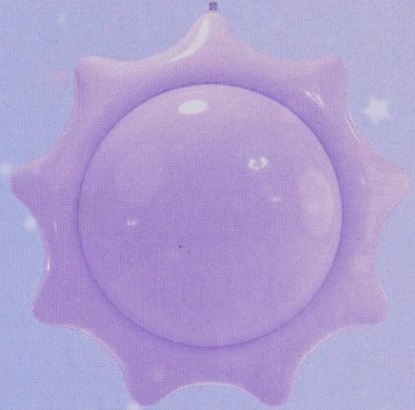


# PRISM

**William Peace University's Literary Magazine**





Melissa Evers



Rise and shine, dear readers.

Welcome to the 2025 edition of *Prism*. In this edition, we explore the power of imagination, desire, and, of course, “Dreams.” Indulge in artistry from the most creative minds and longing hearts, all reaching for something greater.

Drawing from the distinct feeling of drifting to sleep, the 2025 edition of *Prism* is full of celestial imagery, padded by the soft clouds of thought. Each piece evokes the deepest thoughts of visionaries and their innermost ideas—we happily showcase the artistic talents of students at WPU with their interpretations of their ambitions, fears, and most personal experiences when in a state of tranquility.

Dreams can be anything you put your mind to, or anywhere your mind chooses to wander; no matter what, they are powerful experiences. Dreams can lead to new careers, homes, or relationships. They may also lead to stories beyond comprehension and worlds to be explored.

Every artist has the unique privilege of showing others their dreams through text, music, photography, images, and more. As you read, remember your biggest dreams—your deepest desires and the places you wish to be—hopefully, you will resonate with the dreams between the pages and feel them as deeply as you do your own.

Sweet dreams.

PRISM STAFF

2025





# Staff

Editor-in-Chief  
*Nicky Taylor*



*Dr. Eliza Laskowski*



Editor-in-Chief  
*Melissa Evers*



*Alex Garcia*



*Des Lawrence*



*Evan Maurer*



*Khalia Lewter*



*Will Fox*



*Gracen Crow*



*Kayden King*



*Mikayla Davis*



*Isabelle Tilley*





Inside Cover ~ Draper 1—Melissa Evers

4 Becoming—Isabelle Tilley

# Contents

5 Eat Your Heart Out—Melissa Evers

6 I Dream of You—Ashe Draxinger

7 Art by Ashe Draxinger

8 Ya Gonna Feel It in Your Bones—Breanna Downie

9 Paris, Summer—Evan Maurer & Long Beach—Evelyn Uriostegui

10 Untitled—Jake Valentine

11 Fishing—Jake Valentine

13 Specks & Anywhere but Where... —Melissa Evers

14 What Makes a Train—Nicky Taylor

15 Photo by Elisha Thomas

16 & 17 Art by Jacob Trump

18 How Did We Lose Rain—Elisha Thomas

19 The Flooding—Gracen Crow

20 Stairs—Khalia Lewter

21 Sick Streetz Vidz—Isabelle Tilley

23 Basement—Khalia Lewter

24 A Dreamers Dimmed Light—Kaitlyn Bliss

25 Tiny Notebook—Kayden King & Panic—Breanna Downie

26 Photo by Elisha Thomas & EB Portrait—Caitlin Corll

27 Art by Erica McRay

28 Draper 2—Melissa Evers



# Becoming

Isabelle Tilley

I lined up my stuffed animals like  
students,  
pressed their soft bodies into rows,  
stood before them with a voice too  
big  
for my small frame.  
I taught them what I thought I  
knew—  
the way grown-ups talk,  
the way their hands moved  
when they explained the world.

I watched the older girls,  
the ones with voices that turned  
heads,  
who spoke like the air owed them  
space.  
Their hair caught the sun  
their laughter unshaken,  
their certainty a thing I wanted  
to slip into like a borrowed dress.

I practiced in mirrors,  
mouth forming words I wasn't  
ready for,  
tried to stand how they stood,  
chin up, shoulders steady,  
but I was all softness,  
all too much wanting  
and nowhere to put it.

Now, I walk into rooms  
and the air makes way.  
Now, I write words  
that shape the way things are  
seen.

Now, I am the girl,  
the one I pressed my nose  
against windows to watch,  
the one I built inside myself  
out of storybooks and longing.

The stuffed animals aren't even  
gone.  
But I stand in front of real rows of  
people,  
still speak, still dream,  
still reach toward the girl I was,  
who is reaching back,  
wide-eyed, waiting.



Melissa Evers





# I Dream of You

Ashe Draxinger

Sometimes

I dream of you

I dream of your voice, your laughter

Sometimes

I dream of you

I dream of the music you played  
and the music you never got to

Sometimes

I dream of you

I dream of your dreams

to be on stage,  
to play for crowds,  
to heal the world

I dream of you  
and how we miss you

Sometimes

I sit alone, solemn  
and dream of the life  
you now get to live  
free from worry  
free from this world

Sometimes

I remember  
How you'd light up a room

I remember  
your green eyes,  
your bright smile,  
your fresh, rejuvenating scent  
It's slowly fading to a  
distant memory  
Yet still sometimes  
I dream



Sometimes

I dream it was different  
You still here by our side

Sometimes

I wish I said more, did more  
Anything that would  
make things better  
Though, I cannot change fate  
no matter how hard I try

Sometimes

I dream you are  
looking down on us  
keeping the colored flowers  
that rest with you in bloom  
I hope you are still playing  
your music  
for everyone else to enjoy





**Ashe Draxinger**



Breanna Downie





# Paris, Summer

Evan Maurer

When I laid there buried within the sand,  
I wailed out and wept, unable to stand.  
A howl came from the sea and its roar,  
The battering waves bathed me and the shore.

One last week stood between me and my school,  
The season of heat had left me a ghoul.  
But when I had been filled with nothing but strife,  
A mother and son came into my life.

Despite all I would've done then,  
I won't hear their voices again.  
But from my hopes that turned to sand,  
Now sifting through my close-clenched hand.

My dream of a home on the hill  
Will prove my heart's undying will.  
A house of shining words to be,  
My fragile Immortality.



Evelyn Uriostegui





# Untitled

Jake Valentine

Before a minute into my run, I'm wondering if there was a chance my mom had woken from the sound of the door closing behind me. I wonder if the sequence of thoughts accelerating through her head involves a vision of my seemingly inescapable peril or perhaps some weary pride in the fact that her son again rose to log his miles before the Earth did. My eyes are tracking each passing fencepost of the cedar split rail to my right as I think if the roadside buck carcass from yesterday will still be layered with crows upon my passing. There's never a time or place that I usually want to engage with a rotting animal in any capacity, and yet I've unintentionally formed a bond with this deer. Passing its loom of death lets me know that I'm halfway to my turnaround point.

I force each stride's cold breath to act in the place of a frigid Pacific coast morning. I'm delightfully reminding myself that every step is proportionally representative of the journey

toward my chosen destination. It's so difficult not to run when all I have to do is step forward. When winning is continuing, it's nearly unbearable to stop.

The thought of the ocean's frozen waves rattles me until I'm knee-deep in the middle fork of Montana's Flathead. The glacial meltwaters numb my legs, but my focus is on the river. I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be, and I feel no hurry to leave. My world has slowed down as I sense the subtle, accelerating tension of a tight loop being formed by my flyline. Effortlessly it lays itself out over the river ripples before being carried by the billion-year current. Only for a moment does my focus return to my bloodless legs before the surface breaks from the eat of a cutthroat trout. But it's not my fly that is chosen. The trout knows that, unlike itself, I will eventually be forced to leave the river.

The mountains of Glacier spare no heart fortunate enough





to be within their presence. How something so impossibly unmovable could be capable of shifting the foundation of a human soul is beyond my questioning, and I can't pretend the answer matters to me. Water, teal blued with alpine air, demands my gaze and my touch. It's still and clear, and its meticulously placed rocks extend past my vision into its depths. Orange leaves ignited with sunlight scatter every cliff face where a tree is brave enough to grow. Distance becomes immeasurable as each towering pine begins to blend, leaving me to imagine what sits below them upon the land's grasses and layered timber. Once again I have been filled with a feeling so overpowering that I question why it can't remain with me when I am inevitably away. I



come to the conclusion that only God could bestow upon me a mindset like this, one that he created. Of course, he would deliver it to me through his own creation, one that I have fallen for. All I have to do is reach out and grab it when the time comes. It's mine; it has been gifted to me.

The rocks of the south fork's river bank grant a path for me. They demand respect or a broken ankle, whichever the visitor chooses to offer. Each cast finds itself in an argument with the wind. The trout have little interest in what I have to offer them. My day is reaching its close, and the sun I so boastfully beat earlier is now making its way home, taunting me upon its exit. I'm leaving, and I'm reluctant to decide if catching a cutthroat would change that. My brain finds it more important to argue with the idea of calling it quits. My heart plays along, like two friends feeding off each other in an echo chamber. There's nothing out here for my thoughts to echo off of; I am entranced by the current. Believe me when I say I find no point in quitting. Immediately a Westslope Cutty understands that, demonstrating its revelation through a graceful bite of my purple haze. Each click of my reel relieves the weight the setting sun has been laying upon me so generously. Two smiling faces greet me and my trout as I extinguish my mental candle for the night. I return the trout to its home as I accept that I will now be returning to mine. Someday soon, on the beaches of Coronado, I will kill for this feeling again.





Melissa  
Evers



# What Makes a Train?

Nicky Taylor

The sturdy, rusted wheels which seem to  
never stop

as if It were soaring on wings  
even on your worst nights of insomnia;

It is the unstoppable force  
led by someone, or something,  
you may never know

but will miraculously lead you home,  
as if you were experiencing  
a beatific vision of the ear.

Or perhaps it is something more —  
A divine host, bodily or ideally,  
guiding you to the final destination.

It remains powerful along  
the structured path — as though deviation  
may lead to doomsday.

Maybe it is something different  
all together.

Losing sleep, you may consider  
the infernal engine among  
the trees,

rocking your unstable walls,  
moving those worthy to  
the seraphim — defined as

To Burn — burning with love, or coal,  
to create the soot-covered shoes  
you walk to the station in  
every morning.

The angel consumes every thought  
now — you aren't allowed to board this  
path,

a predetermined fate,  
thousands of eyes peek from darkened  
windows as you  
travel your mind  
alone.



Elisha Thomas







**Jacob Trump**







# How Did We Lose Rain?

Elisha Thomas

Traveling home once again,  
Only for so long can I distract myself with friends.

The frigid ground caresses  
The urethane wheels of my skateboard,  
Reminding me of the way your words once did.

Whirling winds embrace my lips,  
Causing me to just crave yours more.

Glimmers of crimson and cerulean light steal my  
attention.  
Patrol vehicles briefly detain the hex that you cast  
many moons ago.  
But I would be a fraud to pretend I did not want the toll  
of you on my mind.

Freezing and disillusioned droplets dive from tender  
tarps to crash upon my head.  
The pawns of precipitation remind me of icy December  
when we first met.  
My memory awakens, transitioning me to the short  
song of January and February.

I recall the faulty magic mirrors we used  
To tell our frivolous fairytale  
And sing ballads of balance and peace.

But soon The Ides of March quickly arrived,  
Slashing the thin thread that ties us together.



"What is the definition of love?"  
Tell me what it was that I felt for you.  
I still feel for you.

Rain once more,  
Not gifting its presence for long.  
It gently waltzes along the construction site  
Rhythms leap off the steadfast scaffolding,  
teasing me with the realization that water needed  
his dance partner of wind to evolve into Rain.

I have finally arrived home.  
As I undress I hear the Sandman call to me.  
He is willing to bear the weight of you from my mind.

But not for too long—  
just brought, so that I may rest.



Gracen Crow





**Khalia Lewter**



# Sick Streetz Vidz

Isabelle Tilley

Theo stood at the library counter, flipping through the list of books his sister had recommended.

"Alright, let's start with *The Catcher in the Rye*."

The librarian adjusted her glasses and shook her head.

"Banned for promoting teenage rebellion."

"Okay... *A Wrinkle in Time*?"

"Banned for subversive religious themes."

"Uh, *1984*?"

"Oh, that one's gone. Too much anti-government rhetoric."

Theo sighed. "What about *The Handmaid's Tale*?"

"Nope. Too divisive."

"*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*?"

"Inappropriate content."

"*To Kill a Mockingbird*?"

"Depicts racial tension."

"*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*?"

"Too mature."



Theo dropped the list onto the counter. "Well, what do you have left?"

The librarian rummaged through a bin behind the desk and produced a single book. *The Ugly Duckling*.

Theo stared at it. "I think I read this when I was nine."

"Well..." The librarian shrugged. Just then, the phone rang. She answered, and listened, and her face paled. She hung up and turned back to Theo.

"Actually, I'm afraid this book has just been banned too. Apparently, it encourages people to think it's okay to be ugly, and under the new executive order, that's illegal now."

Theo blinked. "Oh. Dang."

He walked outside, still processing, and found his friend Peter sitting on the cafeteria steps, watching something on his phone.

"Yo, what are you watching?"

Peter didn't look up. "A compilation of fatal car crashes on Sick Streetz Vidz. It's awesome. What have you been up to?"

Theo rubbed the back of his neck. "Well, I was trying to check out a book, but all the ones my sister—who's in college—told me were good were banned. The librarian said they weren't safe for kids."

"YOOOO that car did a sick flip!" Peter shouted. "Dude, their skull is totally crushed!"

Theo sat down next to him, watching the screen flicker.

"Whoa! That 18-wheeler just caught on fire—dude, it's ramming into that minivan!"


Peter cackled. "Dude, that's crazy!"





**Khalia Lewter**





# A Dreamer's Dimmed Light

Kaitlyn Bliss

As the childlike wonder fades from the eyes,  
The curtain closes, the spotlights begin to dwindle,  
The end of the journey that I believed would last forever,  
No more visions of my name in lights on a bold New York marquee.

From dance classes to voice lessons, auditions to performances;  
To swapping makeup in a dressing room and sobbing  
Into each other's arms closing night;  
Group lunches between shows and dinners after striking the set;  
These memories together forever burned into my retina, flashes of my past.

I begin to wake up from a decade-long rest, my mind regains a sense of reality.  
Back to a world of textbooks and papers scattered aimlessly throughout my room,  
With no recollection of the life I previously lived.  
Abandon all hope of who I dreamt I would become all those years ago.

It will soon become a whirlwind of early mornings  
Powered by last-minute coffee runs,  
Creating bulletin boards of bright colors and fighting with copy machines,  
Urging them to cooperate before the first period of the day begins.  
Listening to students talk and laugh with one another,  
Eventually discovering their own goals and aspirations.

I will spend my days pleading with God to not let these dreams lay to rest.  
If my candle has faded away, may those who follow me protect the flame;  
No matter how dim it may become, never let them allow the light to burn out.



# Tiny Notebook

Kayden King

I touch the pages, covered in graphite  
A collection of pieces, spanning many years  
A time capsule, holding many memories  
My heart pangs at the recollection  
My traumas on display  
My fingers trace the page of the drawing  
I think about the kid that drew them  
I think about how we're not all that different  
They were hurting  
Pouring all of their pain across every page  
Drawings of characters, notes in the margin  
A perfect fantasy of escape  
I read the words on those pages and think to myself  
Was I truly always broken?  
I always looked back  
    in my mind, picturing  
    that kid  
Seeing them smile  
Wishing I could  
    be them again  
But reality hits,  
    they were always  
    hurting  
I realize they must be  
    thinking of me,  
    picturing me as  
    I picture them  
Them crying, drawing  
    a picture  
Praying I'll be okay  
I'd hate for them  
    to see me now  
Still waiting



Breanna Downie











Melissa Evers











**2025 Edition**